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4. PERU: MILITARY UNEASE GROWING.

ALTHOUGH MOST SENIOR OFFICERS STILL SUPPORT PRESIDENT FUJIMORI, MANY APPEAR INCREASINGLY ANGRY OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S TREATMENT OF THE 13 NOV COUP PLOTTERS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF LGEN VALDIVIA MAY SOON MOVE AGAINST THE ARMY COMMANDER AND PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER MONTESINOS. VALDIVIA, THE ARMY'S SECOND IN COMMAND, CAN BECOME A POTENTIAL RALLYING POINT FOR MILITARY MEN DISGUSTED WITH THE ARMY COMMANDER WHO IS PERCEIVED AS ACQUIESCING TO MEDDLING BY FUJIMORI. VALDIVIA COMMANDS WIDE RESPECT IN THE MIDDLE RANKS AND WAS A KEY FIGURE IN FUJIMORI'S 5 APR "AUTOCOUP." FUJIMORI PUBLICLY RIDICULED VALDIVIA LAST MONTH FOLLOWING VALDIVIA'S BRIEF ARREST WHEN THE COUP PLOT WAS UNCOVERED; FUJIMORI IS REPORTEDLY PUSHING VALDIVIA TO RETIRE.

THE ARMY HAS BEEN RIFE WITH REPORTS THAT SEVERAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE COUP ATTEMPT HAVE BEEN TORTURED AND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO CANTO GRANDE, LIMA'S LARGEST CIVILIAN PRISON; OFFICERS ACCUSED OF CRIMES ARE NORMALLY HELD AT MILITARY BASES. RECENTLY, ALLEGATIONS HAVE SURFACED AGAINST MONTESINOS BY ONE OF THE PLOTTERS. MONTESINOS REPORTEDLY SUPERVISED TORTURE SESSIONS IN WHICH THE PLOTTERS WERE BEING FORCED INTO NAMING PROMINENT OPPOSITION POLITICIANS AS CO-CONSPIRATORS; MONTESINOS WAS ACCUSED OF HAVING DELIVERED SOME OF THE BLOWS HIMSELF. ALTHOUGH THE ARMY ISSUED A STATEMENT ON 15 DEC DENYING TORTURE ALLEGATIONS, THE USE OF TORTURE IS PLAUSIBLE.

ALLEGATIONS OF MONTESINOS' ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT WILL FURTHER INCREASE HIS UNPOPULARITY IN THE MILITARY, WHO BELIEVE HE HAS MEDDLED IN THE MILITARY SERVICES PROMOTION PROCESS AND THE GOVERNMENT'S RESISTANCE TO MILITARY SALARY HIKES. AT THIS POINT, SOME OFFICERS MAYBE RECEPTIVE TO ACTION SHORT OF A COUP THAT FORCES FUJIMORI TO READDRESS THEIR GRIEVANCES. MILITARY UNHAPPINESS WITH GOVERNMENT ACTIONS SINCE THE COUP ATTEMPT LAST MONTH MAY INTENSIFY DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS. ANY DISCIPLINARY BREACH IS MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS THAN AFTER NEW UNIT COMMANDERS ARE INSTALLED.

FUJIMORI PROBABLY COULD REDUCE MOST SENIOR OFFICERS' CONCERNS WITH RELATIVELY MINOR GESTURES BUT SO FAR HAS NOT FELT IT NECESSARY. THE GRIEVANCES, IN ADDITION TO THE HARSH TREATMENT OF OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE COUP ATTEMPT, INCLUDE THE GOVERNMENT'S RESISTANCE TO PAY HIKES AND THE DELAY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE SENIOR OFFICER PROMOTION LIST. THE FUJIMORI-ADMINISTRATION PROBABLY WORRIES THAT THE COUP PLOTTERS BEING HELD AT CANTO GRANDE COULD ESCAPE FROM A MILITARY BASE WITH ASSISTANCE OF ARMED FORCES SYMPATHIZERS. RETIRED VADM VARGAS, WHOM THE PLOTTERS PLANNED TO INSTALL AS NAVY COMMANDER, LEFT FOR CHILE ON 20 DEC AFTER HAVING SOUGHT REFUGE IN SANTIAGO'S EMBASSY IN LIMA. FOUR CIVILIANS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN THE ATTEMPT HAVE FLED THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING OPPOSITION POPULAR CHRISTIAN PARTY SECRETARY GEN BOREA, WHO RECEIVED ASYLUM IN COSTA RICA. ON 19 DEC, PROMINENT AMERICAN POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE (APRA) EX-SENATOR SALINAS SOUGHT POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE ARGENTINE EMBASSY. ALL EYES NOW ARE ON FORMER VICE PRESIDENT SAN ROMAN (WHO HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO LEAVE PERU) AND APRA ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL CABANILLAS, THE TWO REMAINING MAJOR POLITICIANS WHO HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF COMPLICITY IN THE COUP ATTEMPT.

DISCONTENT IS LIKELY TO GROW AS LONG AS FUJIMORI AND MONTESINOS ARE VIEWED AS IGNORING THESE INSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS. ADDITIONAL REVOLTS AND PLOTS ARE POSSIBLE; HOWEVER, A CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE LEADER HAS YET TO EMERGE IN EITHER THE MILITARY OR THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION.

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